

A Farmers' Market That's Food Stamp Friendly

"I'm really pleased that our effort has been able to not only connect people with healthy food, but with a viable way to pay for it."

*Shené Bowie,
East Oakland Faith
Deliverance Center*

PROBLEM

Residents in East Oakland did not have a farmers' market or grocery stores where they could buy affordable, quality fresh fruits and vegetables.

SOLUTION

The first and only farmers' market in East Oakland was established along with a payment system that allows residents to redeem food stamps at the farmers' markets.

PARTNERS

- East Oakland Faith Deliverance Center
- Alameda County Public Health Department
- Berkeley Ecology Center
- West Oakland Health Council
- California Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program
- Alameda County Area on Aging
- Inner-city Farmers' Market Association
- African American 5 a Day Campaign

STEPS TOWARD CHANGE

Intent on establishing a farmers' market, the East Oakland Faith Deliverance Center began to collaborate with local farmers, food banks, the Alameda County Public Health Department, social services, community clinics, and other community-based organizations in Alameda County. The partners shared information and completed steps to identify a host site for the farmers' market that complied with city regulations, and they obtained certification for the market.

As a result of their efforts, a certified farmers' market opened at the church parking lot of East Oakland Faith Deliverance Center in spring 2001. The partners worked together to match the market services with the types of resources community residents use, such as the WIC Farmers' Market and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs. They also developed an Inner-city Farmers' Market Association to coordinate the activities of three farmers' markets in the greater Oakland area. Each market accepts California Advantage, Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards so that local residents can use food stamp benefits to purchase food at the farmers' markets.

A weekly certified farmers' market is held at the East Oakland Faith Deliverance Center from April through November. The market serves members of the congregation and residents of the community and meets the needs of over 4,500 people each year. In addition to purchasing farm fresh produce at reasonable prices, community members enjoy nutrition education activities and physical activity demonstrations as part of their farmers' market experience.

For more information, visit www.ca5aday.com or contact Shené Bowie, African American 5 a Day Campaign, at EOFDHealth@aol.com.

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